



May 15, 2009

To: Medical Student Class of 2013

From: Molecular and Cellular Principles of Medicine
Course Co-directors:
Margaret M. Maimone, Ph.D
Constance K. Stein, Ph.D
Robert W. West, Ph.D

Welcome to SUNY Upstate Medical University!

One of the first courses that you will have in the fall is Molecular and Cellular Principles of Medicine (MCP). This course encompasses a broad range of topics including biochemistry, genetics, cell biology, immunology and nutrition, and lays necessary groundwork for the understanding of modern medicine. In the first year curriculum, MCP begins in August and runs throughout the year so that the fundamentals you learn in this course can be coordinated with related topics in other first year courses. In addition, by revisiting the course at different points during the year, you have a chance to refresh your memory and build on the information you learned in earlier sessions.

The majority of material in MCP will be presented in standard lectures, but MCP is the only first year basic science course to also offer small group experiences. In the Clinical Problems sessions, you will be able to apply the basic science you learn in lecture to real life medical situations. The MCP Conferences provide an opportunity for you to read in depth on an important topic in medicine and then present your findings to your group for discussion.

Although the course runs all year long, it is not continuous. MCP will be taught in seven of ten total units. You will receive only a single grade for the entire course, so your scores will accumulate as you progress throughout the year, and your final grade will be assigned in June 2010.

The following three textbooks, which will be available for purchase at the Upstate bookstore and on reserve in Upstate's Health Sciences Library, contain most of the information that will be covered in MCP. Many of the faculty will use figures and diagrams directly from these texts in their lectures.

- Alberts et al., Essential Cell Biology, 3rd ed. Garland (2010).
- Nussbaum, McInnes & Willard, Thompson & Thompson's Genetics in Medicine, 7th ed. Saunders (2007).
- Devlin, Textbook of Biochemistry with Clinical Correlations, 6th ed. Wiley-Liss (2006).

The following are hints that may help you succeed in medical school.

1. For MCP specifically, prior to arriving in August, you might want to review the most important elements of topics normally covered in biochemistry, genetics, cell biology, and immunology courses if you had difficulty with the biology section of the MCATs or weakness in the respective coursework as an undergraduate.
2. Be prepared to get down to work at the start of school. Med school is demanding. You may have to work harder than ever before. Try to get settled in promptly and 'hit the ground running'. Try to adopt a daily routine that allows plenty of time for effective studying. (You can always add back other activities later.)
3. Familiarize yourself on Day 1 with your schedule, the course organization, and faculty expectations. Read the course syllabi that you receive. Review the handouts before coming to class. Budget your time wisely.
4. Plan your weekends strategically. Trips home can really eat into study time, so be sure you have allotted enough time for "work" while you grab some relaxation.

Enjoy your summer! If you have additional questions about the MCP course, please visit the MCP website at <http://www.upstate.edu/courseware/molecular/>.